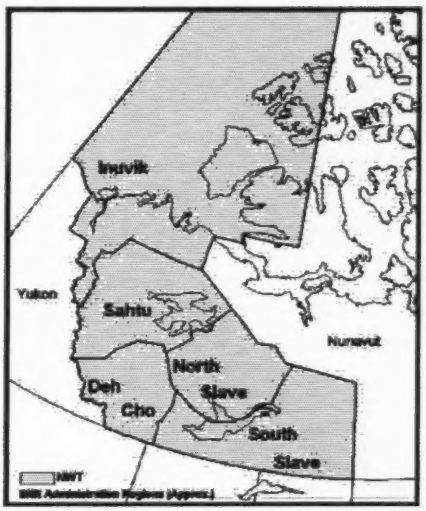
Spills in the Northwest Territories
2007



Produced by: NWT Centre for Geomatics

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources maintains a database of hazardous material spills reported in the Northwest Territories (NWT) since 1971. This report briefly summarizes the data collected for spills reported in 2007.

- *382 spills were reported in 2007, 50 more than 2006.*
- *Over half (52%) of reported spills were less than 100 litres.*
- *54% of the spills reported were in the North Slave Region.*
- *The mining sector was responsible for 35% of the reported spills.*
- *Over one third of the spills reported involved fuel oil.*
- *1.5 million litres of wastewater (mine tailings, sewage, produced water) was spilled.*

WHERE DID THE SPILLS OCCUR?

Of the 382 spills reported in 2007, fifty-four percent (54%) occurred in the North Slave Region. Inuvik followed with 18%, Sahtu (12%), South Slave (11%) and Deh Cho (5%). The Deh Cho was the only region to report less spills in 2007. The Sahtu Region had the same number of spills for two years in a row. The Inuvik Region experienced the largest increase due to oil and gas related activities. Figure 1 below shows the number of reported spills by region between 2002 and 2007.

WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE?

Thirty-five percent (35%) of the spills were reported by the mining sector, most of them occurring in the North Slave Region. Government (including all federal, territorial and municipal governments and crown corporations) followed with 19% of all reported spills down 2% from the year earlier. Since 2005, the petroleum sector has gone down from 24% of the reported spills to 14% in 2007. The largest increase occurred where the party responsible for a spill could not be identified. Unknown parties increased from 3% to 7% in 2007.

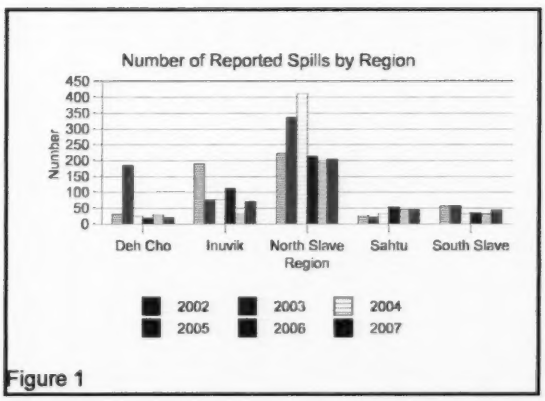


Figure 1

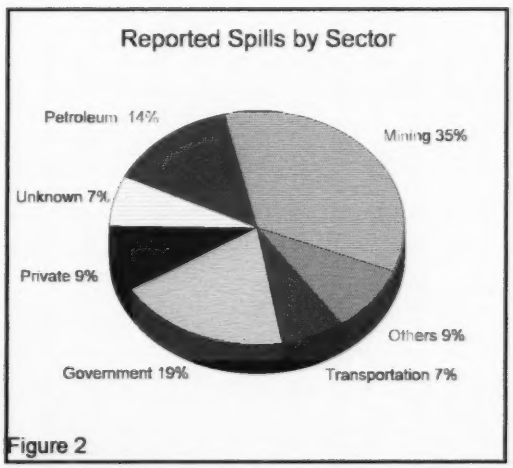


Figure 2

"Preventing a spill is more desirable than even the best clean up!"

WHAT WAS SPILLED?

Fuel oil, which includes diesel and heating fuel, accounted for 30% of the spills reported. Down 5% from 2006, but the volume was higher then the five year average. Most of the fuel oil spills occurred within communities (66%).

The number of lubricating oil spills increased 4% from the previous year. Most of these reports involved blown hydraulic lines or leaks from heavy equipment and haul trucks and smaller industrial vehicles such as pick-ups leaking engine and transmission fluids.

Wastewater, including sewage, produced water (salty wastewater brought to the surface during oil and gas extraction) and mine tailings was responsible for 16% of reported spills.

Chemicals made up 13% of the total number of spills reported. The most commonly spilled chemical was antifreeze or glycol-based products from vehicles.

No natural gas spills were reported in 2007.

Figure 3 shows the number of spills reported by product categories.

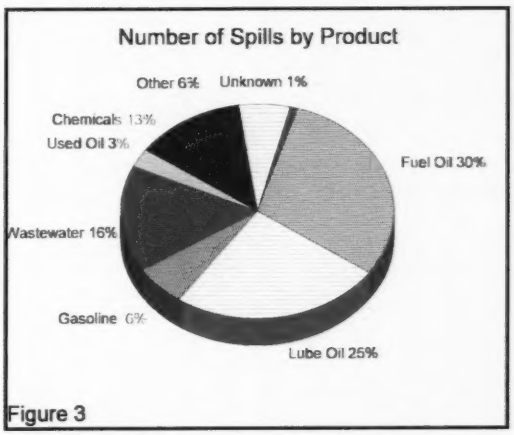


Figure 3

HOW MUCH WAS SPILLED?

Table 1. Volume Spilled (Litres)

	2007	5-Year Average (2002-2006)
Wastewater	1,508,788	1,930,370
Fuel Oil	98,510	78,679
Chemicals	27,278	26,227
Lube Oil	25,731	25,347
Other (crude oil, drill mud)	14,573	41,734
Gasoline	3,880	5,496
Used Oil	485	1,687
Unknown	0	312
Natural Gas[1,2]	0 m^3	5,051 m^3

1 Released to air and reported in cubic metres (m^3). May contain hydrogen sulphide.
2 "Natural Gas" is separated from "Others" to show volume.

Over half (52%) of the spills reported were less than 100 litres (Figure 4).

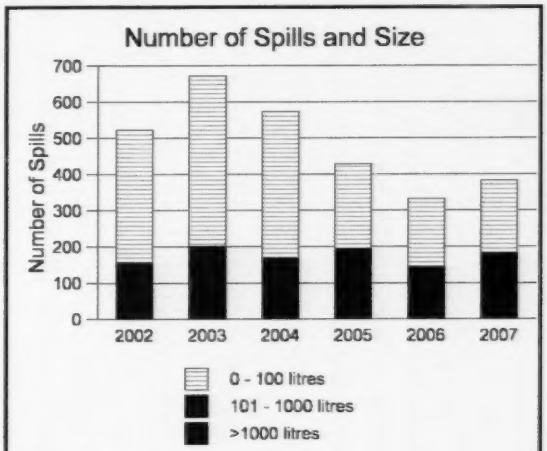


Figure 4

To report a spill call the
24-Hour Spill Report Line
(867) 920-8130
(collect calls accepted)

For further information on spills contact:

Environment Division
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9
Telephone: (867) 873-7654
Facsimile: (867) 873-0221
Website: www.enr.gov.nt.ca/eps/index.htm